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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000643

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TAGS: PREL PGOV IS LE LO

SUBJECT: FM KUBIS DISCUSSES ISRAEL/LEBANON WITH AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Lawrence R. Silverman for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

**¶11.** (U) Foreign Minister Jan Kubis expounded on Slovakia's view of the Lebanon and Iran situations during an Aug. 2 meeting with visiting American Jewish Committee International Affairs Director Andy Baker. We provide this as much as a window on a new Foreign Minister's thinking as on the actual policy position.

**¶12.** (C) On Lebanon, Kubis helpfully emphasized that the international community needed to take this opportunity to resolve the Hizballah issue, something it had failed to do for so long. International - and EU - inaction had served to entrench Hizballah in Lebanon. Slovakia, Kubis said, supported the elimination of as much of Hizballah's military capability as possible. However, Kubis criticized Israel for consistently failing to minimize civilian casualties and for not allowing sufficient access for international relief. He said that such actions had actually strengthened Hizballah politically.

#### THE PUBLIC STANCE

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**¶13.** (C) Although Slovakia wanted EU consensus on the UNSC's handling of the Lebanon issue Kubis said carefully that Slovakia would consult closely its NATO and European partners and wanted "flexibility" to do the right thing. Israel's right to self-defense had to be respected and any cessation of hostilities had to be sustainable. That is why the GOS had been very cautious early on in not calling for an immediate ceasefire. The UNSC needed to find a solution that would last; if a "solution" broke down because it was poorly designed or poorly implemented (i.e., using forces that were not empowered and capable of taking real military action to enforce their mandate), the next crisis would be far worse than the current one. "This business must be finished now."

#### THE PRIVATE CONCERNS

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**¶14.** (C) Kubis said he understood Israel would try to "finish the military job," but asked that in doing so, Israel limit collateral damage. "We are unhappy that humanitarian law is being violated. Too many citizens are being killed." Kubis distinguished between this view, which GOS officials may voice in private, and Slovakia's stance on efforts to criticize Israel publicly. Slovakia did not intend to support efforts to bash Israel rhetorically.

**¶15.** (C) Note: Kubis told a press conference August 1 that Slovakia may offer a military medical doctor team, in addition to financial assistance for humanitarian relief. CDA encouraged Kubis to ensure that any military contribution - even if only the doctors - to a force in Lebanon include Slovak encouragement and support for the LAF to deploy to the south and establish the government's sovereignty over the entire country. End note.

IRAN

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¶6. (C) On Iran, Kubis told Baker Slovakia welcomed the UNSC resolution and would be steadfast in support of efforts to deny Iran nuclear weapons capability. Kubis is convinced that Tehran, feeling the pressure of consensus international opposition to its nuclear enrichment activities, had used its friends in the region, including terrorist groups, to deflect attention from its troubles and try to gain leverage over regional events. Referring to Hizballah's simultaneous provocation of the Lebanon crisis, Kubis said, "I don't believe in mere coincidences."

SILVERMAN